Half Way Up the Stairs

SIDONIE M. GRUENBERG

Halfway up the stairs
Isn't up,
And isn't down.
It isn't in the nursery,
It isn't in the town.
And all sorts of funny thoughts
Run around my head:
"It isn't really
Anywhere!
It's somewhere else
Instead."

—A. A. MILNE

THE child of nine or ten or eleven is "halfway up." At home neither "in the nursery" of little childhood, nor "in the town" of grown-up life, he finds himself in a strange isolation. He is too old to be especially interesting to his elders, or to need their constant care and watching. But he is not yet old enough to command attention with new problems, or to be taken seriously as a person.

From the child's point of view also, he is removed from other age groups. Children but a little younger are to him only babies. Children who are a little older are almost as far away as grown-ups, not interested in the serious business of play and adventure, but concerned instead with dress, or abstract discussions, or love.

It is true that adults cannot be altogether ignored. They hover about on the horizon and are likely at any moment to spoil one's plans or to interfere with one's fun. But they cannot be dealt with systematically, for they are hopelessly irrational, and their ways are past understanding.

We adults are indeed unreasonable. This is because we do not know exactly what to expect of these children whose growing up has taken us all unawares. At one moment we think we see glimpses of maturity; at the next we discover that the boy or girl is still astonishingly young. We are disposed to expect too much in some directions, too little in others.

We expect the child to develop independence, but we struggle to retain our control. We admonish the boy to "be a man," but in the next breath we scold him for presuming on some of a man's prerogatives. He is "too big to cry," but he is too little to be trusted out of sight. We insist that children are now old enough to take care of themselves, when it comes to keeping their clothing neat and remembering where they put their schoolbooks. But we do not admit that they are old enough to stay out with their friends after school without mother's permission, or to make their own choices in spending their time or their allowance.

If we pitch our expectations too high, we give the child little chance to experience success or achievement. If we pitch them too low, we affront his growing personality. How shall we find the happy mean? Just what is the child actually, at this period of his development?

Physically, it is a time of steady, even growth. There is now greater relative immunity to disease than at any other period of childhood.

Intellectually, it is a time of eager absorption of information, ready accumulation of ideas. Children are now experimenting with their environment, trying out people and things, and drawing general conclusions. They are intensely realistic. Even imaginative activity is applied in concrete ways; and their fairy tales must be tales of action and brave deeds.

But it is perhaps in their social characteristics that children of this age are most baffling to us. They

are finding their companions in boys and girls with whom they have much in common, and who are equally indifferent to adults and to younger children. They are finding their places in relation to others, and learning to live as members of a group. They form intense individual and group loyalties that sometimes conflict with the conventions and demands of school or home.

Trying His Wings

EMOTIONALLY, the very essence of this age is its steady, though sometimes imperceptible, weaning, a progress from dependence to independence. By the time the child is eight he is already stepping out from the sheltering walls of home, and also from under its domination. He is extending his action and his thought beyond the familiar; he is exploring the strange and new. He is choosing his friends, developing his own interests, becoming acquainted with the world and with what is going on there.

The child begins to make comparisons, which may become invidious. There are fathers, for example, who are taller or stronger than his own, mothers more wise or beautiful than his own. He begins to question not only his parents' infallibility but their omnipotence. His gods, although they have not actually fallen, are at least beginning to totter. For all that, the young person is still tied to home and mother, still the little child coming to parents for solace and security when the world outside is harsh or threatening.

During this period the child is learning to accept certain basic demands of his world, and certain physical and social restraints. But there still remain many adjustments to be made, with which he needs help and guidance in the years before adolescence brings new difficulties and problems.

He has to be helped to extend the method of comparison to himself and to his companions, for in this way he will learn that one cannot continue to have everything, or to do things always in his own way, or to have always undivided attention—as can an infant. He must learn to make concessions and to meet demands within the home, at school, on the playground, among strangers. He must learn to accept himself, as well as others, in terms of usable capacities and unavoidable limitations. And thus eventually he must learn to know his relative place, to measure himself against other persons of his own age in terms of what is humanly possible for his time and environment.

The guidance which the child needs at this time is especially difficult for two reasons. In the first place, the child makes no insistent demands, he seems to be getting along pretty well without much help. Compared with the earlier years and with adolescence, he is rather self-contained; the routines of school and play fill time and thought, and he is usually satisfied to be neglected by the parents. And, in the second place, the help which can be most profitably given at this time calls for a much broader outlook on the part of the parents than is usually attained automatically. Special efforts are necessary if we are to recognize the opportunities, which are constantly present, and if we are to equip ourselves to use them effectively.

A Challenge to Parents

THE parent's readiness or his lack of readiness are illustrated in various ways. The child is eager, for example, to absorb a vast amount of factual information; but information about sex and reproduction, which could now be assimilated without emotional difficulty, cannot often be supplied by the parents because they themselves suffer from certain emotional strains. The child could not acquire an effective and objective attitude toward money; but most parents are themselves too troubled or too confused to guide him very helpfully in the economic field. The boy or girl could during this latent period learn to look upon variations in the customs and usages among people with a degree of tolerance, if not with sympathetic understanding; but most parents feel so strongly about divergent standards and practices that they try to protect their children against ways of which they do not approve. Here children need help in understanding what different ways and standards mean; here the parent has to interpret mankind, not merely hold up one pattern as worthy and condemn all the others as reprehensible. That calls for reflection, and for self-searching too; the alternative, however, is to leave the child to his own resources and to the chance influences from outside, or to insist dogmatically that our way is the one right way.

The child's choice of companions indicates the development of new interests which are not satisfied by the home and family. His selections may reveal his particular needs. There is the child who is so

sociable that he must always be in the midst of a crowd. At the other extreme, there is the child who shuns companionship and finds refuge in constant reading or solitary play. Both of these children give evidence of a need of escape—the one by losing himself in the crowd, the other by withdrawing from it. Sometimes a companion is chosen to serve the need for having someone to admire; sometimes to be a needed hero. The choice of a much older or a much younger playfellow may be a means of escaping responsibility. Obviously there is a need, no matter how much we disapprove the child's choice; but the need is not met by forbidding or discrediting the association. The parents have to train themselves to look upon the child's preferences or aversions as symptoms, and to guide his social opportunities and conduct accordingly.

The spontaneous activities which older people look upon as play, and therefore of slight moment, are for the child avenues of exploration; and for the adult they may be means of revelation. For play discloses the child's native interests and capacities, as well as his limitations and special disabilities. It is through these experiences that the boy reconciles himself to becoming something other than a second Babe Ruth, or that the girl fixes her ambition on becoming a second Florence Nightingale. Again the child's choice is something for the parents to study, not to obstruct.

All in the Point of View

In this period authority takes on new meanings. We may have prided ourselves, during those earlier years, that we had successfully trained the child to obedience and regularity. He knew what was expected of him; he did not do the forbidden. He has been reasonably prompt in going to bed when reminded. He puts away his things, he washes, he is regular. And we had naturally assumed that early training would serve a lifetime. But then almost without warning this beautiful state vanishes. What has happened to all the well-established schedules and compliances? Bedtime becomes a daily struggle; hats and coats, books and toys are left lying about with no regard for order. Washing takes more effort in the constant reminding than did the baby's personally conducted bath. Is this the fruit of all our careful groundwork?

The explanation is that the child has gradually arrived at an age in which he cares only for the approval of his own age-mates. Our parental discipline, depending for its effectiveness upon our approvals and disapprovals, languishes. In the world which the child now inhabits the washing of hands, or the appearance of which we approve, is not a matter of interest. Coats and hats are incidental. Bedtime is a necessary evil, to be put off as long as possible. It is natural for us to remind the child; but it is not natural for the child to comply in the face of all the other pressures and demands. If the earlier discipline was too rigid, the danger now is of violent reaction against all authority.

Holding His End Up

To guide him helpfully we must accept the fact that he has to assert his own personality increasingly, that he has to "put himself across," even if the only way he knows is by seeing how far he can go in refusing to comply with the established regulations. The child accordingly needs to be made to feel that his ability to do the regular things is taken for granted, that the demands made upon him are not like those made upon an infant who does not know what is expected, but like those made on a responsible, cooperating member of a group of personalities. He is expected, that is, not to obey certain more or less arbitrary rules, but to share in carrying on the common affairs of the household, in making life more agreeable for all concerned. He has to be reminded from time to time, but reminding should never become nagging; he has to be corrected, too, but that need never be reproaching.

The inner personal needs which are slowly working to the surface have to be harmonized with the demands of living with other persons in many kinds of relationships. And of course that means responsibility. But one does not acquire responsibility all at once, like putting on long trousers. It is a slow growth, which is strongly influenced by the home. While the child is still under the affectionate protection, as well as control, of the home, it is the parents' task to develop their own understanding, to emancipate themselves, to anticipate the coming time when adolescence will put a stop to that control. It is they who must watch for indications of the child's readiness to assume responsibility, and then use freedom to advance that growth.

Instead of waiting for an important mark on the calendar and rushing upon the child with the keys to the city, we must consciously release the child,

step by step, from childish restrictions. In countless small ways we can help him feel that he is being released. There are errands to be done, street-crossings to be made alone and unattended, on occasion a latch-key to be carried. Through the stretch of years the child can learn to handle money, his own allowance as well as increasing amounts to be spent for the household. He can answer the telephone, and receive and transmit more and more elaborate, more and more important messages. He can take charge of a younger child, he can be left at home alone. It is thus that the child learns to rise to new occasions, to meet responsibilities as they come; he is learning to be on his own and to sense the increasing dignity of the confidence which is placed in him —all conditions essential for responsibility. The growth is through a balanced alternation of protection and independence.

This age between infancy and adolescence is in many ways a passive period during which growth and development might be largely left to themselves, if we lived under conditions that permitted "natural" impulses and drives to take their course. But in our kind of civilization, which requires that the individual fit himself to so much that is conventional, not to say arbitrary, the transition from protected dependence to responsible adulthood cannot be allowed to care for itself. This we, of course, recognize through our schools and other educational devices. But the home cannot leave to these all the functions of education and guidance, cannot really avoid being a powerful influence. Nor can we direct and guide the child on the assumption that what was good practice in ancient times, as transmitted to us by our grandparents, will necessarily be good practice when these children grow up.

It is impossible to obviate all the problems of adolescence; some growing pains are inevitable. But in homes that have been consciously aware of their children's growing needs, and have sought to meet these progressively as they arose, the appearance of adolescence fits into the family's pattern of living without avoidable frictions and unnecessary heartburnings.

Tangles of the Latency Period

The middle years of childhood are singularly like a chrysalis, in which apparently dormant forces are laying the foundations for further growth.

LILLIAN MALCOVE

THE latency period, more than any other time in the growth and development of the individual, bears a striking resemblance to a chrysalis or pupa. It is a stage in which the child seems outwardly to have reached a quiescent interval, yet inwardly very vital changes are taking place. In the physical sphere the endocrine system continues steadily to move toward a balance which will, within a relatively brief space of time, when latency merges with adolescence, cause striking bodily changes. So also in the emotional sphere there appear very important changes which are causally antecedent to the maturity heralded by adolescence. If this development proceeds satisfactorily, the metamorphosis continues so quietly and undramatically that the period is indeed the least eventful one, and well merits the designation "latent."

This subtle metamorphosis in the human pupa stage depends both on the intrinsic, innate structure and on the external, environmental structure which ideally has the task of protecting the change. With regard to the intrinsic structure, it is well to remember that the human being, as the highest form of biological development, is consequently the most vulnerable to mishaps, and that its most specialized part, the psyche, is correspondingly most susceptible to disturbances. With regard to the environmental structure, we must keep in mind that it unavoidably contains potential hazard, since it consists of a relatively extensive milieu of intimate family, relatives,

friends, teachers, and others, each of whom individually may be emotionally handicapped to a degree that keeps him from acting for the child's greatest advantage. This double source of possible tangles will become more apparent as we examine the possible vicissitudes of the child's metamorphosis.

The Task of Developing Character Structure

GROWTH in this period is predominantly the slow and subtle process of building character structure. To be sure, the earlier years have not been without the same purpose, but now it becomes of primary importance. We are able to observe, in the child's external behavior at this time, a gradual withdrawal from the earlier dependence on the parents, greater self-reliance, a development of a more exacting "conscience," a relatively decreased interest in overt sexual activities, and greater interest in his or her own sex with the forming of strong friendships. Stated in the most concise terms, it is dominated by the formation of sublimations, and the development of definite character traits. The kind of growth at this period which most closely approaches the theoretically normal is, therefore, characterized by a maximum of healthy and satisfying sublimations which succeed in diverting certain energies from the original goal to non-sexual goals which are both satisfying to the individual child and also acceptable to the group. Furthermore, through the interaction of the forces both of experience and of the fundamental biological structure, definite character traits develop, which, like the sublimations, should serve the individual to his greatest interest and advantage, by making for group acceptance and approval.

Since fundamental factors in the child's total integration depend on the satisfactory formation of adequate sublimations and character structure, impediments, intrinsic or external, make the sublimations proportionately less complete, and tend to produce character traits excessively dominated by inadequately assimilated impulses and experiences. Although minor deviations from what we call normal are not necessarily neurotic, the child may suffer some degree of deviation in character structure which causes him to obtain less than his full due of happiness and satisfaction from his experiences and his relationships with other people. But since we know that ideal development would demand both an innate structure and an environmental medium which are very nearly impossible, we must think of "the normal" as the nearest practicable approach to the ideal rather than as the ideal itself.

Familiar Deviations in Character Structure

INDIVIDUALS who show deviations in character structure need not show overt neurotic symptoms, though such characters may certainly be considered "neurotic." We need to be reminded of a few familiar types of distortion. There is, for instance, the child who is always in some kind of difficulty apparently not provoked by himself. The school bully selects him as a target for his pranks; the teacher catches no one but him, even when a number of children are at fault; his friends tease and "pick on" him; an illness that is prevalent takes him as a first victim, and so on. Such a child seems unwittingly to work against his own interests, though he is the first to bewail his lot. He is helpless to change. Yet the picture he presents so consistently certainly cannot be considered accidental. There must be something within him that makes him work against himself and contrary to nature. Then there is the child who expects everyone to love him undividedly and to satisfy all his wishes, although he will make no move toward deserving or reciprocating their affection. He takes but cannot give. There is also the child who has learned the habit of cleanliness too well for his own comfort; with his excessive meticulousness and bathroom rituals he converts wholesome cleanliness into a burden. Illustrations of more specific character traits that do not dominate the personality so completely, but still work against the child's interest, are all too familiar; they include jealousy, meanness, stubbornness, negativism, and others.

Although we know that tangles of this period can produce infantile neuroses, as well as character distortions, the dividing line between the disturbances that involve character structure as such and those that cause symptoms that warrant a diagnosis of neurosis is arbitrary. Beyond pointing out the two possibilities, the differentiation does not concern us here. What is more pertinent is to observe the child's sum total response, the ease with which tangles are turned into symptoms, his utilization of these symptoms or traits for special advantages, and the result of neurotic symptoms on character development. Tangles basically similar produce in some children character distortions without obvious symptoms, and

in others actual neuroses or seeds from which later neuroses develop. The variants in the intrinsic structure of individual children, and in their resistance to unfortunate experiences, as well as the differences in their actual experiences, determine the degree to which tangles distort and incapacitate them.

"Flight" or "Fight"

In general, the child's behavior is of two types, depending on whether the character of the response is basically "flight" or "fight." The first produces a picture of restriction of activities and withdrawal from people. It may include any or many of such symptoms as growing timidity, fears, excessive indulgence in phantasy, rituals, obsessional symptoms, and a generally heightened seriousness with more impulsive loves and hates. These symptoms frequently suggest preoccupation with conflicts or tangles which cannot be straightened out by the child himself. The opposite picture is dominated by excessive aggressiveness, often with dangerous daredeviltry, general rebelliousness, and other signs of a fight beyond control. At this point it may be worth while to re-evaluate the relatively greater stress recently put upon the withdrawal type of reaction. Although it has in the past been too much neglected, current efforts to make adults aware of its seriousness have overemphasized it. It will not do to forget that the "fight" type of reaction can be as dangerous to the individual and to others as that of "flight." In estimating the seriousness of any reaction, the mechanisms that produce the symptoms, rather than the symptoms themselves, should be taken into account.

Tangles Common to the Latency Period

So far this sketchy description has done no more than represent the formative latency period as a chrysalis from which development can proceed in any one of a vast number of directions, from the ideally normal to the seriously distorted. The important question of the more direct relationship between latency and specific tangles now arises. Under relatively satisfactory circumstances, the latency period, following upon an earlier childhood lacking in mishaps, tends to expose the child to relatively few tangles directly dependent on this particular period of development. The earlier task of beginning social adjustment and parental weaning is behind him; and the task of attaining sexual maturity and more thorough emancipation still lies ahead. The pressures of acute physiological and psychological change are more likely to be absent than present.

Many of the symptoms of the latency period represent earlier unsolved conflicts, and therefore do not necessarily differ in form from earlier symptoms. There are, however, some differences that are important as indications of the possible lines of the child's future development. Symptoms derived from the vegetative functions are usually on the decline; eating disturbances are less frequent; bowel incontinence does not occur except in very pathological situations. Enuresis, however, is only too frequent, and is of more serious consequence now than in earlier years. Enuresis in a child of this age usually persists until adolescence unless treated; and the treatment can seldom depend on dealing only with this particular symptom. Symptoms of social maladjustment in relation to the group and school are relatively more frequent than earlier, as are also symptoms which involve shrewdness and intellectualizing and depend on increasing intelligence. Thumbsucking usually gives way to some derivative of the same primary need in the form of nail biting, or hair stroking, or fetishistic prizing of a baby blanket or bunny. Stuttering, if severe, usually continues.

Tomboys and Sissies

One problem is rather specific to the latency period; this is an excessive emulation of the opposite sex which influences profoundly the child's behavior. By means of available sublimations, each sex is able to satisfy some degree of need to be like and compete with the opposite sex. Normally this phase of development takes care of the child's bisexuality, which is stronger in the younger than the older child. The girl turns to the domain of sports and education, while the boy may show his maternal tendencies through his relationship with a younger brother or sister. Should these traits be exaggerated, the girl is called a "tomboy" and the boy a "sissy." The total behavior differs with each individual; but "tomboys" show the rebellious type of reaction, becoming aggressive, more or less boisterous, and excessively competitive with a distinct preference for boys' company and games, while "sissies" usually become timid, fearful, unhappy, withdrawn, and much more at ease with girls than with boys. Although such a boy may attempt to conceal this state

from himself and others by compensatory aggressiveness and excessive disdain of everything feminine, some details always reveal the true state of his inner feelings.

In current society the girl's emulation of the boy is quite acceptable, and open competition is to some extent encouraged, whereas the boy's tendency to emulate girls is always frowned upon as a stigma of inferiority. But in either case, when this phase of identification with the opposite sex takes on considerable proportions, so that the girl behaves as if she wishes to be a boy and actually pretends to be one, or the boy tends toward girlish interests only, then there begins to be a distortion in the psychosexual adjustment which may form a nucleus of serious difficulties in later life.

Managing Tangles

DEPENDING on the type and degree of deviation and its contributing causes, tangles may be untangled. But this requires close scrutiny of events that may be related to the beginning of the change in character or of the neurotic symptoms. These should be sought first in the more obvious causes in the social milieu, and later in the child's personal misconceptions and misconstructions. The group at school or at play may include a bully who chooses to terrorize this one child beyond his capacity for endurance. The teacher may, for some personal reason, fail to establish rapport with the child and thus jeopardize the all-important personal factor in the child's school adjustment. Or the teacher may be an unwitting victim of an identification on the child's part with a hated brother, sister, or parent. Unavoidable changes in the family group, such as separations, second marriages, deaths, and so on may also occur. Less obvious but equally influential is the parent's response to the child at this period of his development, since the middle years of childhood may seem to the adult relatively less interesting than early childhood and adolescence. Then too the sex of the child is often responsible for certain unhappy phases of the parent-child relationship. Or the horizon may be clouded by the appearance of a new baby; or the parents' interest may begin to be directed to another one of their children, who in his growth becomes more affectionate, gay, and irresistible.

All these occurrences, and the temporary tangles resulting from them, are within the range of "the normal" in family relationships and in child development; they should leave little permanent damage if detected and alleviated early. Fortunately, too, these tangles have means of communicating themselves to us through distress signals which always point to something having gone amiss. The signs themselves differ and usually do not reveal the cause, since their form depends on the child's total personality. They may take the vague form of relative unhappiness, sulkiness, contrariness, greater secretiveness, anxiety; or there may be regressive signs such as recurrence of enuresis or thumbsucking. Failure to detect the cause of the difficulty, indirectly through analyzing the environment or directly through gaining enough of the child's confidence so that he can discuss his tangles, points to a need for consulting a psychotherapist. It is encouraging to know that the latency period has been found a very fruitful time for successful psychiatric treatment.

Looking Toward the Child's Future

IT HELPS our faith in human nature to know that the slighter and almost inevitable little storms, though they may cause explosive outbursts and for a time seem to threaten the progress of growth, can be and are rendered almost totally innocuous either without any help or with only some minor adjustment. It is only when the tangles have been so deeply internalized that they can neither right themselves nor be remedied by manipulating the environment so as to remove the source of the irritant that there is a danger of developing a serious handicap.

Some criteria may be helpful in evaluating the relative seriousness of symptoms observed in children:

The actual seriousness or triviality of the external difficulty which precipitates a particular symptom gives a good indication of the degree of stability in the child as well as of his powers of recovery.

The persistence of a symptom, after the irritant which provoked it has been removed or modified, suggests that the tangles may have been seriously internalized.

The amount of additional satisfactions and advantages which the child has built up on the basis of particular symptoms will determine to a great extent his need to hold on to them. Remaining close to mother because of a fear of going out in the street may, for instance, have in itself untold advantages which the child would be loath to surrender for the

questionable gains of what adults call "healthy and grown-up" behavior.

The parental satisfactions in the child's symptoms should not be underestimated. A mother may welcome her child's approximating in behavior a "model child," or his suddenly becoming meticulously clean, or slavishly obedient to or dependent upon her.

Unfortunately this very summary discussion of the latency period must for lack of space leave untouched the very important question of prevention. In the most general terms, whatever we know and can apply of the principles of mental hygiene has as much validity during latency as at any other period of the individual's life.

The School and the School Child

Teachers and parents view the child from different vantage points; they can contribute most fully to the rounding out of his development by pooling their knowledge of his needs.

SARA E. BALDWIN

ONE of our American humorists refers to the age from eight to twelve as the period when most parents would have a better chance of survival if their children could remain under chloroform for three or four years. People are able to laugh at this witticism because so many of them regard these years with trepidation, as a period in which they "simply don't know *what* is going to happen next" in the lives of their children.

It is an age of intense activity disporting itself in unanticipated directions. It is an age shadowed with elusiveness, when the growing child slips into distance spiritually as well as physically. An honest parent acknowledges that the child has a right to this growth, but untwines the apronstring with apprehensive uncertainty. The school, too, has its moments of uncertainty in regard to the abilities and the reliabilities of children of this age. None the less it is impressed with the fact that this is not merely an "in between" period, connecting infancy and adolescence, but a period unto itself—a period of remarkable progress.

The age from eight to twelve is one of contradictions. On the one hand, it is an age of great physical activity. Baby chubbiness lengthens into long slim legs and arms with hardening muscles. The new strength and muscular coordination are utilized and increased by running, tussling, hiking, skating, and swimming. This is an age for the development of skills in which the finer coordinations are brought into play by organized games, such as baseball, soccer, or tennis in their simplest forms, and by certain arts and crafts, such as weaving, woodcraft, or metal work. There is a coltish uneasiness on the part of these children which keeps them in action most of the time. On the other hand, many children lapse into fancy or daydreaming, and, with bodies completely inert for long periods of time, let their minds travel into distant realms.

Mental ability is equally varied. Many children display an astonishing familiarity with the workings of the family car, the electric meter, the doorbell, or the radio; they have a curious acquaintance with radio programs and names of performers, with the new family next door; they know the ages and birthdays of relatives, the place where the family of bluebirds is nesting this year, and where the best patches of wild flowers are hidden. A thousand knowledges are theirs by right of discovery. This intellectual curiosity is often misapprehended as "nosiness," but quite frequently the accusation is partially correct.

Without doubt this is a period when children possess great eagerness to know and to find out; yet a sublime disregard of details is equally characteristic.

"Where is the book with the homework in it?"

"Where are my skates?"

"I forgot to do the errand."

"I forgot to put away the dishes."

In a dozen trying ways these children dodge responsibility and, to all intents and purposes, are

at a low ebb of practical learning and remembering.

Further contradiction is discovered in the matter of personal appearance. Looks apparently cause little concern. Hair does not stay combed, washing is not a vital interest, and clothes are torn or soiled with less regard than the age would seem to warrant. Yet extreme fussiness is displayed toward certain articles of apparel. Except for summer sportswear, "shorts" are taboo; the average schoolboy is miserable unless his knickers fasten below the knee. Girls may be equally fastidious about dresses with belts, versus dresses that hang from a baby yoke.

The Urge to "Belong"

EIGHT-TO-TWELVE is an age of gangs and cliques. Children frequently experience unhappiness because they are not accepted by the gang or clique which seems most desirable. Frequently they are *in* but not *of* the chosen group and are "picked on" or criticized unmercifully by the other children of the charmed circle. Quite as frequently the unpopular child of one year is agreeably accepted the next with apparently no hard feelings in regard to former indignities. Yet one of the characteristics of this gregarious age is its paradoxical tendency to unsocial behavior. Quite universally the journey to and from school is likely to be beset with problems varying from discord among the children themselves to a united approach toward various forms of mischief.

Quite as universal is the question, "Who is responsible for changing the unsocial behavior—the home or the school?"

In some places, this problem has become a subject for discussion at parent-teacher meetings, and as a result definite plans have been made by which home and school can work together to promote more harmonious behavior in the "no-man's-land" between home and school.

These, then, are the qualities which the child brings to the school. They *are* the school child of the upper elementary grades. What is the school doing to complement, to satisfy, and to guide these characteristics? Briefly, the school is following in the footsteps of the home. It is meeting its problems constructively and understandingly; it likewise is making its mistakes. An encouraging trend is the growing tendency of the school to relinquish the belief that the school is always right. It feels, instead, dependence upon the home as a basis for understanding the child and realizes a need for cooperation with the home in meeting the child's requirements.

For many years the school has acted upon the knowledge that the approach to learning in the intermediate grades differs from that of the primary grades and from that of the junior high school years. In the primary grades attention is focused on the development of skills. In these grades the child acquires techniques of the reading process, the spelling process, and the processes of arithmetical computation. In these years, attention likewise is focused upon the enrichment of personal experiences; and as fast as skills develop, they are, of course, utilized to contribute to these new experiences. In the intermediate grades the procedure changes. Through the use of the skills, experiences are greatly widened. Whereas in the primary grades his experiences were fundamentally personal experiences, it is now possible for these to be expanded into an almost limitless field of vicarious experience. Through his ability to compute he sees aspects of barter and trade, of financial processes, of quantity and measurement, which hitherto have been hidden from him. Through his ability to spell and write he can perpetuate his thoughts or convey them to other people. Through his ability to read he has access to places, times, people, and processes that have been beyond the farthest boundaries of his imagination. The wide practice and use of the skill processes in these grades will be superseded by the refinement of the skills in the junior high school. Processes of analysis and research in subject matter will characterize the next step in the field of study. These finer processes of study are made possible only by means of a thorough grounding in the use of reading, computation, spelling, and writing in the earlier years.

What the School Can Do

THE intermediate grade level offers a threefold opportunity. The intense activity and the avidity for learning which are characteristic of the age, plus the possession of tools for acquiring vicarious experiences, make possible a curriculum with amazingly rich and rapidly progressing subject matter. Considering the slow development of arithmetical processes during the history of mankind, it is almost inconceivable to find that children are expected to master the process of long division dur-

ing the fourth grade, fractions in the fifth, and decimals and percentage in the sixth. This, however, is the usual curriculum for these grades, although some schools are beginning to feel that the demand is unwarranted and that part of the work should be postponed until junior high school.

Vicarious Adventures

A WEALTH of reading, pictures, and laboratory materials provide rich experiences in geography, history, and science. Literature is indispensable to these studies, besides having a distinct place of its own in enriching the imagination and developing insight into the child's living world.

During these years many children become omnivorous readers. At the beginning of this stage, they frequently appear to have developed little taste in the matter of books, reading almost anything which is within their power to read, whether or not the book has literary value, and whether or not its content is in keeping with their interests. This lack of discrimination can be accounted for by the fact that the child probably is enjoying the practice of his newly acquired reading skills to the exclusion of content. The situation is analogous to the miles of sledding which children undertake with no further objective than to determine how skilfully they can slide down the hill. Eventually the phase will pass, and under wise guidance literary taste will assume its proper place in the scheme of things.

It is the right of the children at this stage of high intellectual curiosity and increasing proficiency in reading to have access to a wealth of reading matter. Too often school libraries, public libraries, and home libraries are most inadequately supplied with suitable reading materials for children of this age. A certain interested and discerning mother recently declared that if a home, where financial limitations are not insurmountable, wishes to cooperate adequately with the school, the children's bookshelves should be an index to the school's program in science and in the social studies. There is food for thought in this statement. Too often children's bookshelves represent large sums of money spent for books which are shallow in content and which have little or no literary merit.

In the school life of the child, these years in the upper elementary grades become a period of reckoning. Difficulties which have not seemed oversignificant in the primary grades become lions in the path in grades three, four, five, and six. In the lower primary grades the fact that a child has not mastered reading or arithmetical processes does not always cause alarm. To the parent, the child seems "just a little child" who only needs a little more time to learn. In many cases, the primary teacher recognizes a lack of maturity, and believes that more experiences are necessary before putting pressure to bear on these study processes, conscientiously believing that when the child finally does grasp the process he will progress rapidly and make up for lost time. Frequently this is the case; but there are occasions when the prophecy is not fulfilled, and the years from eight to twelve are full of struggles to master skills or subject matter which should have been given more emphasis in the lower grades, even to the extent of repeating a grade if necessary.

Meeting Each Child's Special Needs

SOMETIMES the child does not progress because he is mentally unable to grasp the learning processes of his chronological grade level. Parents of these children frequently are unwilling to recognize this fact and live in hopes of improvement, until proof of slower development is manifested in the years from eight to twelve, when the child continuously fails to measure up to the standards for his age. Such children have considerable difficulty even when parents accept the situation and expect from them only what they are able to accomplish. The difficulty is infinitely increased, however, by parents who are unwilling to accept the fact and accuse the school of avoiding its obligations.

Problems of equal difficulty are presented by the child whose intellectual abilities and consequent achievements are far in advance of the average, but who has never learned to mingle with his fellows in a natural and companionable manner. He becomes nervous and high strung, a child who causes strain and tension in all of his associations. In many such cases, the child may mingle gracefully with adults but cannot take his place in the social life of other children.

Special promotions present problems which often reach a point of tragedy. The specially promoted child who has been a leader in a lower grade too often finds himself at the bottom of the older group. Baffled by complexities in arithmetic, and overwhelmed by subject matter in the social studies, he is unable to keep up with the rest of his class

because he lacks experience. He has not lived long enough to take his proper place in the group. He needs more time to assimilate experience and mechanics. Frank, who led his group in first grade, was mature, stable, and happy in his school work. His superiority prompted special promotion to third grade where he made a fair adjustment. In the fourth grade, however, he became timid, fearful, nonassertive, remaining in the lower fourth of the group. He was not demoted because he held to minimum and low average standards for the grade. This continued through the fifth grade. During the sixth grade, he rose to the average of the group and seemed to have regained much of his former security. He did not, however, regain his former leadership. This was assumed by pupils of perhaps less intelligence but of more years. It is quite true that this is not always the case. In a number of instances a special promotion is the only solution for the problem of an aggressive, socially mature child. Enough children, however, have had experiences similar to or worse than Frank's, to show that special promotions are hazardous undertakings and should be entered into only after the most serious consideration.

From the Teacher's Viewpoint

TEACHERS of this group have many problems which are quite as acute as home problems. From the first, there is the problem of the preparedness of teachers for their work. There is increasing likelihood that teachers will be intelligently placed in the grades for which they are best adapted. This, however, does not hold in all communities. Under some administrators the belief is still retained that a position in the intermediate grades is a promotion over one in the primary grades, and excellent primary teachers are sometimes forced to become mediocre intermediate grade teachers in order to retain their so-called professional status. Other teachers are placed in these grades, not because they choose to be placed here, but because they are found to be good disciplinarians and can meet rising emergencies with a firm "do-as-you-are-told" treatment, which is considered by many people to be effective with this "obstreperous" age.

The teachers of this grade level share with teachers of other grade levels the problems of being prepared to meet parents, and to work intelligently and pleasantly with them in the guidance of their children. Assuredly the training of all teachers must include enough psychology and mental hygiene to make this sort of cooperation possible.

Certain problems appear at this period which probably have not assumed serious proportions in the primary grades. Without doubt inability to meet the demands of the school curriculum is often the source of behavior difficulties. The great quantity of content material and the rapid progress in the use of arithmetical and spelling skills offer a fertile field for the copying of other children's work, or cheating in small ways too numerous to mention. In the newer schools there is something in the frank attitude toward work and toward self-discipline that reduces this factor to a minimum. But, in most schools of the past and in many schools of the present, the matter of cheating assumes serious proportions.

Respecting the Child's Confidence

THERE are other problems of an even more personal nature. Frequently teachers are very privately and confidentially requested by the children to answer questions concerning matters of sex.

"Why did my mother need to stay in the hospital for two weeks when the baby was born?"

"Why did my mother look so large before the baby was born?"

"Why was my mother ill before the baby was born?"

Questions of this sort are an indirect way of saying, "Please tell me where babies come from. How are they born? Why should this be the one question I must not ask my mother?"

In such cases the teacher is in a delicate situation. She must gives answers which are satisfying to the children; yet she feels that she must not give an amount of information which will antagonize parents, who strangely enough frequently resent having an outsider give information which they have not had the wisdom, or perhaps the courage, to provide.

It is true that both home and school are represented among those who have an intelligent understanding of children in the environment in which they see and know them; each group is also represented among those who do not understand. It is possible and necessary for home and school to have mutual understanding and respect.

In schools which are making an honest effort to

(*Continued on page 32*)

Boys

The world they live in seems to be almost untouched by adult conventions and standards; yet, given half a chance, they will mature to man's estate

Thomas P. Robinson

I OFTEN wonder how children can help growing up bow-legged, lop-sided, big-headed, or wrong some other way. They have so much oversight and directing from the grown-ups. Dr. Holt began it—as far as my experience goes. But he in his *Care and Feeding* . . . stuck, as I remember it, to the physical side of rearing. His successors cover all sides, body, soul, and spirit, beginning on the child in the womb and following him through to the grave. They divide and subdivide their subjects till a child looks like an exploded ant-hill. It might not be so bad if some master-mind proportioned the fragments according to importance and ran a line of unification through the lot; but the emphasis which each scientific adult gives to his own specialty creates, in application, a dangerous tendency to warp the specimen under treatment into shapes away from normal. It's a good thing that mothers, getting confused in the multiplicity of directions, fumble enough to let nature take her course. And it's a good thing for children that nature knows her job.

Boys up to their teens educate themselves by the trial-and-error method, which is the only realistic method; and letting them alone is a good way to help them do it. I learned the fact by observation, helped out a little perhaps by memory. The method of treatment was thrust upon me: I have boys of my own. Like all good philosophers, I have explained the fact to myself to make it seem reasonable. Here is the explanation:

A boy starts out in a given environment with a given background—call it anything you like, heredity, for instance. The background is the important thing. He can't help it, and you can't help it. You and he, either or both, may alter it for the next generation, but in the present moment it is unalterably what it is. He works with it and from it, reacting instinctively to the things he sees around him. He takes what he wants or what he can get, and what he takes is an addition by himself to his own background. He builds it up with few or no concessions to ideas or desires other than his own. He grows from his own roots like a tree, only his roots are mobile. He absorbs and keeps on absorbing the things that mean something to him. He acts out of the resultant background.

A boy is not just another little animal, though he does what he does instinctively. He uses his brain as just another hand to help him get what he wants, or another foot to help him go where he's going. He never sets his brain apart and gets intellectual and important on account of it as adults do. He is a pragmatist about brains as about everything else. It follows that you can't tell him anything he doesn't want to know. He won't take it on. He won't resent it or argue about it, as a rule; he just lets it go. He may set up a holler and get pig-headed; but if he does, it is a stall. Furthermore, you can't tell him anything anyhow, whether important to him or not. He knows what you are going to say, before you say it. He knows, too, if what you say is what you mean, or whether you are just exerting "personality," or practicing a theory, or having a sense of duty. You can't put anything over on him except the thing you are, and he knows that without your help.

You can't turn a boy's attention to the higher life by telling him about it, or by trying to shove it into him, any more than you can get a horse to eat beefsteak. The higher life is in him, but no one but himself can separate it from the miscellaneous matrix that contains it. It will emerge when and in proportion as he recognizes it. It is a spiritual process rather than a mechanical or intellectual one. You can perhaps walk ahead of him or around him or behind him—and you have to know something to know what to do and how often to do it—dropping this and that as you walk, letting him pick up the parts of the litter that interest him. But you can't

tell him what to pick up, or how long to keep it, or what to do with it, unless you want him to lose interest right away. It is only the mentally middle-aged, who are beginning to get afraid of life, who think they can take what doesn't belong to them. Boys seldom do. If they sometimes make a mistake and do, other boys will set them right. Adults can't do it except, of course, by force; and force never creates belief.

A Law Unto Themselves

I DON'T much believe in clinical treatment. Run boys through a system, and they will either dodge it or throw it out of gear. If they don't, set them down as subnormal. They need better food and more freedom, not direction and constraint.

Like a flock of birds in flight, boys are gregarious but individual. Their paths are devious, but, given themselves, logical and simple like a snake's. You can't be abstract with them; neither can you hold up models for their benefit. It is worse than having mother show your photograph to strangers or having to dress up for a girl's party.

A boy is a boy till he gets to the age of wanting to be something besides what he is. Adolescence crowds him; cults, codes, and prohibitions crowd him. At such times, he gets himself overemphasized in various directions. But a boy in the state of nature creates his own orbit and moves within it. Within this orbit certain things are included from the fringe of adult life, such as bed and board, teachers, parents, chores, and the like. He ought to be allowed to use these things and not be used by them. Certain other things are outside his orbit, like girls and the status quo. If a boy likes a girl, it is because she approximates another boy. She can swim, play ball and hockey with him, and ask no odds. As for the status quo, "He'd as soon bust it as suck an egg." He uses it, of course, as he uses anything else that will serve his purpose, like a slug for his sling-shot, but he has no respect for it as an institution. If a boy wants a stick of candy, he knows he has to have a penny. He gets the penny, not necessarily by an approved method. The penny has no value in itself. Adults have forced the value of a penny on him. He would sooner swap a real thing for the candy, but adults own all the candy, and they don't know enough to take a real thing in exchange for it.

His own standards are related to accomplishment and character. He senses character and values it instinctively, whether in colleagues or grown-ups. Accomplishment establishes itself. How well you can fight; how fast you can run; how much you know about the flowers, birds, and mushrooms; how big your stamp collection is; how long you can stay under water; whether you are good in school without showing off—the questions vary with the background. And most important, are you a square-shooter? Nothing counts with him but real accomplishments built on real abilities honestly used. Not that he won't play tricks or bluff or even lie or steal if he has a background that lets him, but even these things are done as a game important in itself with little or no ulterior motive and with a sense of values all his own.

To put a boy in jail for stealing a wrench to fix his bicycle is merely adult stupidity. Of course you don't let him steal the wrench; but you prevent it as another boy would. Take it back again, using as much force as necessary. Probably you can show him he isn't playing the game fair. Call the "cop" and have him arrested, and you introduce him to something he doesn't believe in and teach him only to evade this inconvenience in the future. Belief in a thing must take possession of him and be his own achievement before he can add it to the background out of which he acts.

The Spice of Life

A BOY has an increasing vocabulary, not only of words, but of interests; his actions in pursuit of them are his sentences and paragraphs. The interests rise and fall with occasions, moods, times of day, and the state of the weather. His expression is as flexible and unconfined as the language of a political orator. He will start for a swim, forget it for a game of craps or marbles, and end up hunting birds' eggs or rattlesnakes. He lives in the moment, and the major interest of the moment controls his changing actions.

Luckily for him, he, of all ages that make up this mad world, is least touched by its antic ideas, and luckily for the world too. Because he retains his sanity today, he may carry it with him into adolescence and manhood. The world of the future is his world. He may make of it what he will, if the girls will let him.

If this be treason, make the most of it!

Parents' Questions and Discussion

These discussions, selected because of their interest in connection with the topic of this issue, are presented for the use of individuals and of study groups.

STUDY GROUP DEPARTMENT

CÉCILE PILPEL, *Director*—JOSETTE FRANK, *Editor*

A girl of nine dawdles so that she has constantly to be urged to "hurry" in order to be on time for school and other engagements.

In some homes, the early morning is a hectic period, during which too many things have to be done and there is a general tense atmosphere of haste and anxiety. If a nine-year-old girl has no home duties to perform and has access to the bathroom, she should be able to get herself entirely ready for school within an hour. In order to do this, she must be helped to get her clothes ready to the last detail before she goes to bed, so that there is no last minute searching for necessary articles. Ten minutes of planning in the evening will often save much more than that amount of time in the morning.

Some children dawdle in the morning because they are either not interested in school or are unprepared for the day's work. Sometimes their relationships with their classmates are not happy, or the teacher is not sympathetic. Sometimes a child dawdles in order to get attention from the adults; she may prefer being nagged to being ignored. Whatever the reason, it is necessary to try to overcome the underlying difficulty.

A few devices may be tried which sometimes speed up the morning start. If it is possible for the father or an older brother or sister to walk part of the way to school with the child, she may look upon this as a pleasant part of the day. Her mother might help her to draw up a morning program, allowing a certain number of minutes for dressing, for the bathroom, for breakfast, and for getting to school, and then help her to keep within this time limit set down by herself.

Parents sometimes allow a child to be late for school so that he may suffer the consequences and perhaps learn from that experience. This is unfair to the school, which has the right to demand of the home that children arrive on time, adequately fed and clothed, and in a comfortable frame of mind. To get the child to school is distinctly a problem of the home and it should not be transferred to the school.

It is becoming increasingly difficult to get a nine-year-old to go to bed on time. He finds all sorts of excuses for "stalling."

Most children are like that: Keenly interested in everything that is going on in the adults' world, they "don't want to miss a trick." The arbitrary bedtime seems to shut them off from all the things they want to see and hear, and from all companionship. Even with a nine-year-old it is possible to make the transition less difficult by going to his room with him to kiss him good night, to adjust his window and arrange his covers, and perhaps listen to a little last-minute chatter. We can also help to make bedtime less difficult by making it less abrupt. If the child is busy with his own interests, then a little while before the hour set for his bedtime, we might suggest that he begin now to "shut up shop," to finish up whatever he is working on or playing at, and not begin any new activity. Sometimes children suddenly remember, just before bedtime, that there is homework still unfinished, or other necessary tasks to be done. It is our business to inquire about such tasks earlier in the day, and to see to it that these are taken care of at a more reasonable hour. With a child of this age, firmness and a little humor are more successful than peremptory commands.

A boy of eight, who has just started to attend public school, is using bad language which he picks up from other boys.

We have to distinguish between language that is simply colloquial and therefore out of harmony with our traditions, and language that is definitely vulgar and objectionable. Children will adopt the former in order to be regarded as "reg'lar fellers." The latter may offer the child various kinds of satisfaction. Sometimes it represents a gesture of independence or perhaps a revolt against a too-genteel home standard. Or it may be the child's way of calling attention to himself in at atmosphere where he has little opportunity to shine, and where he knows his language at least will be conspicuous. We have to think in terms of time and stages of development. The "language" he is using now will be replaced with other forms next year, even next week. Then, as a greater variety of experiences brings wider interests, this kind of expression will die a natural death, if not kept alive by parental displeasure and overemphasis.

How much responsibility should we expect a ten-year-old to take in the home and in the care of her own room and belongings?

That would depend very much on what the home set-up is and how much of the actual work of the household is done by the family members. If the adults of the family do not have these responsibilities, and the tasks are usually done by paid servants, there is no reason to ask the child to do more than put away her personal belongings. To insist on her doing any of the household work under the circumstances would simply be making gestures, not training for responsibility. But in a household where all or part of the housework is done by members of the family, we would expect the child to take responsibility for her own room as her fair share of the common tasks. Here it becomes a matter of sharing responsibility, an important part of any training for social living.

The average ten-year-old is certainly capable of making her own bed, tidying her room, and keeping her things reasonably in order. But we have to keep in mind, too, that children of that age are not naturally neat and orderly. It is not usually a matter in which they are interested at all. Sometimes we can interest a child in making her room attractive, inviting her to help choose furniture or curtains for it, and encouraging her to invite friends to come to her room. But as a rule a ten-year-old is not yet interested in her room in that way; in that case all that we can do is to see that she does the necessary tasks with the least possible stress. We will probably have to keep reminding her (this need not mean "nagging" her) and occasionally lend a helping hand to get the routine tasks over as expeditiously as possible.

A fifth grade has just formed a Current Events Club; the children are to read the papers daily and bring in interesting items. The mother of a ten-year-old boy in the group questions whether children of this age should be permitted to read newspapers. "It seems to me," she says, "that kidnapings and racketeers and even international debts —to say nothing of divorces and sordid murders— make pretty indigestible fare. Wouldn't it be wiser if the teacher were to make a selection for the class to discuss?"

When a child begins to read the papers, the first reaction of almost any mother is to "view with alarm." Even those who believe that for adults censorship defeats its own purpose, by giving whatever is prohibited an exaggerated lure, wonder if for children censorship is not justified. Aside from the fundamental objection to censorship on principle, there are two arguments against it in the specific case of children's newspaper reading. In the first place, the things from which children need protection in any city are so many and varied that overprotection becomes almost unavoidable. Generations ago, when life was less complex and more direct, children were inevitably more exposed to life "in the raw." The children of pioneers, for instance, knew what sudden danger meant at first hand; the children in a backwoods village knew from local gossip when the town's first citizen "carried on" with someone else's wife. Perhaps our children need somehow to discover that life is not all sweetness and light. And how can they learn this more objectively than through seeing these things thrown into the hopper of the day's news? And in the second place, how long do most children linger over these sensational stories? One nine-year-old, for instance, has recently picked out of the papers such "news" as: the "dragons" in the zoo, the "sea monster" stories, the baby quintuplets, the pouring of glass for the world's largest telescope, the "believe it or not" column, and the funnies. In other words, he does his own censoring, just as the rest of us do. We may assume that

he sees at least the headlines on other kinds of news, but they certainly do not overburden him.

If a child seems to seek out sensationalism and either to gloat over it or to worry about it, this preoccupation is more a result than a cause. Perhaps life is just too dull and the child finds no better way of satisfying his craving for vicarious adventure. Perhaps he has some still more profound emotional difficulties; after all, children do experience primitive impulses which they do not, if they are fairly normal, put into action. It is not impossible that crimes of sex and of violence may touch a sore spot hidden beneath a well-conducted exterior. If so *that* is the point at which to begin; to prohibit newspaper reading would be to put the cart before the horse. But where a child has plenty of other interests, is generally happy and secure, and is on good terms with his own world and the people in it, the glimpses which the newspaper gives him may be a legitimate preview of the outside world.

Suggestions for Study: 8 to 12—The Neglected Age

TOPICAL OUTLINE

Characteristics of This Period

1. Physical
   - General sturdiness and freedom from disease
   - Growing vitality and endurance
   - Sound sleep
   - Good appetite
   - Need for activity
2. Emotional
   - Increasing independence of parental leading strings
   - Apparent indifference toward sex matters
   - Interest in things and activities rather than people
3. Social
   - Group and gang play
   - Teams, clubs, "secret" societies
   - Indifference or mild antagonism toward opposite sex
   - Gang standards in language, dress, and amusements
4. Educational
   - Interest in acquiring facts
   - Patience with routine learning
   - Pre-specialization stage
   - Influence of companions as cause of conflicts with home standards in
     - language
     - dress
     - manners
     - routines of bedtime, movie attendance, Sunday school, and so on
   - Lack of interest in orderliness, neatness, refinements in relation to difficulties at home and at school
   - Venturesomeness, tirelessness, need for energy outlets as causes of restlessness

PROBLEMS FOR DISCUSSION

1. In a fifth grade class in a coeducational school the only girls and boys who are popular are those with athletic ability, the accepted leader being the baseball champion. Is this a normal and wholesome situation? What dangers would you sense if you were the teacher? How would you manage such a class?

2. How much homework should eleven-year-old children be expected to do? What kind? Can they manage satisfactorily without any? Which is the more desirable school plan—that demanding some homework, or that allowing for all preparation during school hours?

3. Since girls mature earlier than boys, twelve- and thirteen-year-old boys are often annoyed by the attentions of their girl classmates, whom they consider nuisances. Would segregation of boys and girls at this stage be generally desirable? Is there a danger that the boys' interest in girls may be stimulated too early? How may the normal emotional development of both boys and girls be fostered?

REFERENCE READING

Adjusting the School to the Child
By Carleton Washburne. *World Book Co.* *189 pp.* *1932*

The Individual in the Making
By E. A. Kirkpatrick. *Houghton Mifflin Company.* *339 pp.* *1911*

Mental Growth and Decline
By H. L. Hollingworth. *D. Appleton & Company.* *396 pp.* *1927*

Our Children: A Handbook for Parents
Ed. by Dorothy Canfield Fisher and Sidonie M. Gruenberg. *The Viking Press.* *348 pp.* *1932*

Parents, Children, and Money
By S. M. and B. C. Gruenberg. *The Viking Press.* *219 pp.* *1933*

Personality and Social Adjustment
By Ernest R. Groves. *Longmans, Green and Co.* *353 pp. rev. ed.* *1931*

The Psychology of Childhood
By Naomi Norsworthy and Mary Theodora Whitley. *The Macmillan Company.* *515 pp.* *1933*

The Real Boy and the New School
By A. E. Hamilton. *Boni & Liveright.* *386 pp.* *1925*

Book Reviews

The School Age Child As the Novelists See Him

THE CHILD psychologists complain that between six and twelve is the period least studied of all, mainly on account of the secrecy of this age and the organized hostility to adults. Yet it is just this period which most of us remember as our childhood—our real childhood, untainted by the premonitions of early adolescence and its preparations for mature life. What the psychologist misses in this period the writers have given us in splendid variety by digging into the rich store of individual recollections which is open to each one of us.

Among the older classics, Thomas Bailey Aldrich's *The Story of a Bad Boy*, though written before the Civil War, remains the favorite book (by vote) of ten- to twelve-year-old boys. And it is not hard to discover why. Although this picture of a boy's life in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, in the mid-nineteenth century may seem a bit smugly sentimental to us now, it is still probably the best study of the tremendous variety of youthful play—individual and organized village pranks, an old-fashioned July Fourth, honorable boy-to-boy fights and downing of the school bully, a wonderful New England snow battle with map formations; the whole panorama of a wholesome boy's gang life—all, all are here, and with just the proper touch of humor and pathos to endear it to youth, and with the author's complete and whole-hearted absorption in his bad boy to make it a true revelation of boy's life to the rest of us.

What *The Story of a Bad Boy* does for the boy, Mrs. Wiggin's *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* does for the girl. Enshrined in every girl's heart is that little girl in Riverboro, Maine, who plays Eliza-on-the-ice while leaping across puddles on her way to school. Rebecca's life under the rigid supervision of her maiden aunts, the ways of the tiny community seem almost as unreal to us today as life in a strange country. There is never any doubt, however, about the reality of Rebecca—Rebecca with her luminous eyes, her vivid imagination, her penchant for getting into the most ludicrous scrapes. And, in spite of the old-fashioned tone of the book, Rebecca is never a prig. She draws no conceit from her unusual talents and intelligence; in fact, like many children, she deems it a drawback to be so much quicker and more restless than her companions. She emerges as one of the most delightful girls in the records of childhood.

But the classic of classics, the child's book with a touch of genius, is Barrie's most unsentimental book about *Sentimental Tommy*—Tommy who thought himself a wonder and was. Yet "unless you admired Tommy, he was a boor in your presence; sly and self-distrustful." All boys' books record pranks, but the classic secret prank, lit with Tommy's immortal genius, is that last Jacobite rising, engineered by Scottish Tommy after a passionate dose of the Waverly novels. He embarks with a few faithful companions upon his campaign—down with Queen Victoria, "The Woman of Hanover," and restore the Stuarts—so fervently that, with his gift for putting himself into other people's shoes, he is soon transformed into the Pretender himself. And surely there has never been a description of a fair as ecstatic as that of the glory-intoxicated Thrums children at the Muckley Fair. "They were not looking at the Muckley, they were part of it." The ironic humor in Tommy is something quite rare and infinitely more subtle than that in *The Story of a Bad Boy*. There may be a finer book about a child than *Sentimental Tommy* but I have never read it.

Among the well-loved books about children at the beginning of this century is *Understood Betsy* by Dorothy Canfield Fisher. The story of Elizabeth Ann's progress as she goes from the doting care of her Aunt Frances to the undoting and wholesome circle of her Vermont country cousins is really a sugar-coated treatise on the wrong and right ways of bringing up a child. Elizabeth Ann is nine when she is sent to the Vermont farm, but it is not until then that she really emerges from babyhood into girlhood. Among those relatives who solicitous Aunt Frances thought were so cruel (because they let children alone) Betsy for the first time discovers her

sense of humor, a sense of her own dignity, how to do and think for herself. Children enjoy this perhaps too simplified and idealized portrait of life on a farm more than grown-ups; but the latter can find great pleasure in Mrs. Fisher's delicious way of writing with her tongue in her cheek.

The English countryside of about 1900 is the setting for the two books by L. Allen Harker, *A Romance of the Nursery* and *Concerning Paul and Fiametta*. These stories are about a family of two boys and a girl, Paul, Harry, and Janey, who are visited one summer by Fiametta, the highly imaginative and precocious ten-year-old daughter of a poet. Fiametta and Paul, the talented strange children, are balanced by Janey and Harry, who have both feet solidly on very English ground, but who are fully as engaging as their more vivid companions. Their well-bred impudence is delightful and devastating and the tenuous presentation of the relationship among the four of them, as well as their adventures, presents a delightful portrait of the more charming aspects of English family life.

These children are closely related in time and spirit to their more famous compatriots in *The Golden Age* and *Dream Days* by Kenneth Grahame. The five children in these books live even more constantly and fully in the land of imagination than do Paul and Fiametta. The boys occasionally come down to earth sufficiently to show the contempt for girls so characteristic of their age, but are more often unboylike enough to demonstrate their affection. The barrier that does exist stands between their world and that of the adult Olympians whose edicts they obey but never understand. Although they are very real children who have many scuffles, hair-pullings, and punishments, still they inhabit a poet's world for the greater part of the time. It is Kenneth Grahame's beautiful prose and remarkable rendering of these children's daydreams which make these books unforgettable.

Among the modern books about children is one which has already become a minor, although hotly disputed, classic, Richard Hughes' *A High Wind in Jamaica* (formerly called *The Innocent Voyage*). No one can read this strange tale of children who fall into the hands of pirates, and reverse the situation so that it is the pirates who fall into the clutches of the children, without mixed emotions of delight and horror. It all begins with a hurricane in Jamaica, about one hundred years ago, after which the children "for the first time began to regard their parents as rational human beings with understandable tastes —such as sitting on the floor to eat one's dinner." But the effect on the parents, alas, is the decision to send the children to a safer place such as England. On this journey, the children's boat is captured and they accept the change to the pirates' ship without question, distinguishing little between so-called disaster and the ordinary course of their lives. One of their group falls down and breaks his neck, but by unspoken agreement among the rest of the children his absence is never commented upon. Emily, at the ripe age of eleven, murders a Dutch captain who has been captured by their pirate ship; and after they reach England, the pirates who had treated her so kindly are brought to the gallows for this murder by her own testimony. Many parents are enraged at the picture of these amoral children. Yet the author stresses the fact that children, without the social guidance of adults, are something almost nonhuman. Parents should be complimented by this portrait of what happens to nice children when there are no parents to guide them. Take or leave the grisly plot, the book remains a masterpiece of rare prose and sly humor.

Worth Remembering by Rhys James is an episodic realistic story of Southern children, somewhat in the Penrod manner but with much more genuine humor and a much tougher approach to life, though still sweet compared to Mr. Hughes. Perhaps the most notable thing in the book is their incredibly rich slang (really a special language) learned from their colored Mammy who is the one adult influence in their lives. Biddy, the girl, accepts insults from the boys on the ground of her being a "damgal" which would completely crush the usual sensitive child. The three of them preserve a fierce gang loyalty and hostility to outsiders which give the gentle reader the impression that they would be a very unpleasant group to brush up against. But, as reading matter, they make for a highly amusing and original book.

In *Bloody Mary's* Geoffrey Dennis has written a striking study of a sensitive boy entirely in terms of his life from eight to thirteen at Queen Mary's Grammar School in a small historic town in England about thirty years ago. The boys call it Bloody Mary's after the Scottish Queen, its foundress, but it is also a bloody nightmare of flogging and ragging. When the boy, Abel, first goes to school we have an unforgettable picture of childhood's timeless anxiety, in the torture of this eight-year-old sent to

school with a corduroy suit and garish lunch basket, both in execrable taste, which he knows will be mocked at by the other boys. There is a more morbid note here than in any of the other books here reviewed, yet Abel is not always an unhappy child. After he forms his own "crew," we see him emerge from a state of passive dreamy loneliness to an active interest and pride in the other members of his gang, a new esprit de corps and learned loyalty, and finally a real happiness in the company of his friends. The marvelous and intricately detailed memory of school days is one of the most amazing things about this book.

The strange thing about all of these books is their very high level of insight and truth, each in its own light. I suppose they are so good because they come from the secret depths of the authors' own childhoods. They offer a magic bridge across the rift caused by the adult's inability to recognize the world of the child's imagination.

PAULINE RUSH FADIMAN

(Nina Lowenstein assisted in reading the many books from which those reviewed were selected.)

Many Lands in Books for Children

One Day with Jambi in Sumatra. By Armstrong Sperry. The John C. Winston Co., 32 pp., $2.00.

In Sumatra a day in a little boy's life can, it seems, include riding on an elephant, playing with a monkey, defying crocodiles, killing the dreaded tiger, and being honored by the Sultan for his brave deed. To any small boy in America this must seem to be life very close to the heart's desire. But if one is six (or even seven or eight) and cannot live in Sumatra and encounter tigers, one can still find a delicious thrill in adventuring vicariously with Jambi. Mr. Sperry has made this day in Sumatra even more exciting than last year's *Day with Manu;* and his illustrations are no less colorful and dramatic. Even his black-and-whites exude the richness and glamor of the jungle. The whole is a beautiful picture book with a fine story. J. F.

Kees and Kleintje. By Marian King. Albert Whitman & Co. 80 pp., $2.00.

Perhaps the children who first met Kees some four years ago will be too old now to follow his further adventures. But their six-year-old brothers and sisters will be glad to make the acquaintance of this sturdy little Dutch boy, as he reappears now with his pet duck, Kleintje. His visits to the Cheese Market of Alkmaar, his trip to the shoemaker's, and his contest in the flower show give us pleasant glimpses of the daily life and occupations of a small boy in Holland. J. F.

The Pageant of Chinese History. By Elizabeth Seeger. Longmans, Green and Co., 378 pp., $3.00.

Out of a wealth of legend and anecdote, great masses of mythical stories and events, Miss Seeger has selected, as simply as the task allows, material which in its entirety adds up to portray an important aspect of Chinese civilization. She takes modern China back to its mythical beginnings, from the early struggles of Tartar invasion to the renaissance of a people awakened to beauty in art, literature, exquisite living, and philosophy—a culture that has survived the strife of a people. The mass effect is like a Chinese tapestry unrolling, through word pictures in poetic prose, the march of a people. Miss Seeger has a fine feeling for the Chinese tempo, the rich family life and customs of the people, and their religion. For the young reader this book should be an alluring open sesame to a more profound study of Chinese history. T. B.

Anything Can Happen on the River! By Carol Ryrie Brink. The Macmillan Co., 224 pp., $1.75.

The picturesque Seine and its teeming river life are the center of a thrilling tale of adventure of which a young French orphan boy is the hero. The tale moves swiftly, as such tales should. But its strong river flavor, its picturization of life as it is lived on the river, and the clear delineation of characters and locale distinguish the book from the ordinary run of adventure tales. Not the least delightful feature of the book is its title—*Anything Can Happen on the River!* And almost everything does! J. F.

The Conquest of Mexico. By William H. Prescott. The Junior Literary Guild, 585 pp., $3.00.

The erudite and sympathetically comprehending history of the conquest of Mexico by William H. Prescott, written some ninety years ago, stands above the necessity of modern criticism. We must, however, record our gratitude to the present publishers, first for bringing the work to the attention of this generation of young people, and second, for presenting it in a format so abridged and so attractive that

(Continued on page 32)

In the Magazines

Absolute Music and the Teacher. By Artur Schnabel. The New Era, May-June 1934.

The writer, a well known musician, composer, and teacher interprets "absolute music" as an independent art and discipline. He feels that it is the province only of the specially endowed, and makes a careful distinction between professional and amateur. The education of the amateur, his teacher, and the practice of music are also discussed.

Other articles on music in this issue are: *Broadcast Music in Great Britain* by Adrian Boult, and *The Influence of Rhythm and Tempo on the Child* by M. and G. Martenot.

What to Expect of a Baby. By Jane R. Aiken and Marjorie Anne Mortland. The Parents Magazine, August 1934.

"What a six-month-old can do" is described and tabulated in this article. The writers also indicate what not to expect during this stage of development.

Attitudes of Children Toward Their Own Bodies and Those of Other Children. By Miriam S. Dillon. Child Development, June 1934.

This study was carried on with two groups of children who shared a common playground. The first group was made up of eleven boys and eleven girls with a mean age of 34.7 months; the second, of eight boys and eight girls with a mean age of 51 months. The behavior recorded includes: manipulation of the genitals, interest in parts of the body (the child's own body or that of another child), and the behavior of the teachers. This study is of special interest to students and teachers of young children.

Children Discipline Each Other. By Berniece Lee Mort. The Parents Magazine, August 1934.

The give-and-take of play among children for them constitutes public opinion, and helps to prepare for adult life. The writer illustrates her discussion with anecdotes of how children learn from each other.

Essential Values of the Family. By Sidonie Matsner Gruenberg. The New Era, May-June 1934.

The unique position of the family as it affects both child and parent, as well as the meaning of parental responsibility today, is considered in the light of social and educational changes which have made inroads into family traditions.

Soviet Women. Soviet Union Review, July 1934.

Women, according to this statement, make up thirty-three per cent of the students in Russian higher educational institutions. Many hold important scientific posts, not excluding the field of invention and exploration, in addition to participating in every field of economic, social, and cultural activity.

Parent Education in the Protestant Churches. By Harry C. Munro. Catholic Parent Education Activities. By Edgar Schmiedeler. Parent Education Under Jewish Religious Educational Auspices. By Israel S. Chipkin. Parent Education, June 1934.

In an explanatory editorial the National Council of Parent Education describes the purpose of these articles, which form the first of a series. The editorial also poses an array of questions which should be stimulating both to the parent educator and to the religious education leader.

Life in the Nineties—Home and Parents. By Henry Seidel Canby. Harpers Magazine, August 1934.

Contrasting the family picture of the nineties with the contemporary home, the "then and now," Mr. Canby gives an impression of the rhythms and tempo of home life characteristic of his own childhood. "Parental opinion had the right of way," with "more affection between parents and children and much less companionship." The "age of confidence" of a generation ago is weighed against the present age, when self-expression is the watchword of both parents and children; and the implications in this change of attitude are sympathetically analyzed.

News and Notes

Child Study Association—1934-35

The Child Study Association enters upon its forty-sixth year of activity in parent education, bringing to its many friends a program of activities, which both continues to meet perennial family needs, and also presents new material and current views of fresh interest. The past few years have been difficult ones; but the interest and devotion of members, staff, and its many loyal friends among educators and specialists have enabled the Association to carry on. By keeping the quality of its service at a high level, the Association trusts that it will continue to justify their unstinted generosity.

The winter's activities will be opened by a Day at Headquarters, with a program of study group demonstrations announced in detail in the Calendar. The opportunity to become acquainted with Headquarters activities and to meet the staff members informally proved so popular last year that a similar open house again inaugurates the season. During the remainder of the opening week, consultations with the staff may be arranged at any time and study group registration will continue. Announcement of the study group program, which opens October 22, will be found on page 25.

Several important new features will amplify the regular activities of the study groups and the lecture program: The Consultation Service will offer individual consultation to adolescents and young people, as well as to the parents of young children, and will serve as a rounded family consultation service for practical guidance in all matters pertaining to the well-being of the family as a whole. The Association also offers to prospective lay and professional leaders in parent education a more intensive training course than that given in previous years. In response to many requests, an evening course in religious education will be held in the late winter with outstanding authorities on the philosophy of religion as speakers. An outgrowth of study group work of special interest to readers who do not live within easy reach of Headquarters is the special staff leadership service now available for groups in suburban communities. These groups will, in effect, reproduce the work at Headquarters. For detailed information regarding this service to suburban groups, consult the Director of Study Groups.

Coming Conferences on Parent Education

"This Business of Being a Parent" is the title of the Tenth Anniversary Conference to be held by the Baltimore District Child Study Association on Tuesday, October 30, at the Lord Baltimore Hotel. The morning session on "Are Parents People?" will deal with the adjustment of the individual as a parent and as a person. The speakers are David Allen Robertson, President, Goucher College; Sidonie Matsner Gruenberg, Director, Child Study Association; George D. Stoddard, Director, Iowa State University Child Welfare Research Station; and Sadie D. Ginsberg, Director, Baltimore District Child Study Association. Three demonstration meetings will be held in the afternoon with staff members of the Child Study Association as leaders. Speakers at the dinner meeting will include: Joseph S. Ames, President, The Johns Hopkins University; Everett Dean Martin, Director, The People's Institute, New York; Mrs. Everett Dean Martin, President, Child Study Association; Esther L. Richards, Associate Professor of Psychiatry, The Johns Hopkins Medical School; and Mrs. Walter W. Kohn, President, Baltimore District Child Study Association.

The Fourth Biennial Conference of the National Council of Parent Education for workers in family and parent education will be held in Washington, D. C., November 1, 2, and 3, at the Wardman Park Hotel. It will be devoted to a consideration of "Social Philosophy for Education in Parenthood and Family Life," and will be preceded by a meeting of the Council. While this conference is arranged and conducted by Council member organization representatives and by professionals affiliated

with the Council, all members of the professions whose work includes any form of family and parent education are invited to attend.

New School of Social Research

Several courses of special interest to parents and teachers are announced by the New School for Social Research in New York for the coming year. Dr. Eva Wunderlich, of the Stadtische Studienanstalt in Berlin, will lecture on Progressive Education in European Countries, covering such topics as the origin and development of new ideas in education, pedagogic reforms with reference to the individual and society, industrial schools, school farms, religious education, and national education before 1933. In the course on Psychology and Physiology in Education, Dr. Edward Liss, Consulting Psychiatrist to the Hessian Hills, Windward, and Durlach schools, will discuss the normal development of the preschool child as the background for pedagogic techniques. In a course on Sociology for Teachers given by Daniel Harrison Kulp, Associate Professor of Education at Teachers College, Columbia University, the social processes involved in learning and teaching will be studied under such headings as: clarifying facts and fictions in the "new" education, the relation of schools to economic and social changes, the place of the school in the political system; the menace of propaganda; the relation of education to religion; and the teacher and the community. For further information, consult the New School, 66 West Twelfth Street, New York.

"Let's Go Places"

A pamphlet containing a list of more than two hundred interesting things to do or see in and near New York City has been published by the New York Adult Education Council, under the intriguing title *Let's Go Places*. It may be secured at 10c a copy, or 5c in lots of ten or more, from the Council's offices at 366 Madison Avenue, New York.

Popular Lectures on Psychoanalysis

Two courses of special interest to parents and parent educators are announced by The New York Psychoanalytic Institute in its fall program. Dr. David M. Levy will give six lectures on Parent-Child and Sibling Relationships, emphasizing problems of maternal overprotection, maternal rejection, and sibling rivalry. A series of five lectures on psychoanalytic topics for the general public will be given by Drs. A. A. Brill, L. Blumgart, P. R. Lehrman, M. A. Meyer, and F. E. Williams. For a detailed program, apply to the Institute, 324 West Eighty-sixth Street, New York.

Pros and Cons of Home Study

Arguments for and against home study are pretty evenly balanced, according to a panel discussion sponsored by the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, in connection with the National Education Association convention in Washington on July 5. The invited panel of parents and educators was somewhat surprised when several school children joined in the discussion from the floor and expressed the opinion that home study is, on the whole, rather a good thing, when administered in small doses. The youngsters, ranging in age from twelve to seventeen, heartily agreed in condemning long assignments and suggested that teachers get together so that each will realize that other subjects besides his own require outside work.

In opening the discussion, Mrs. B. F. Langworthy, President of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, who acted as chairman of the panel, pointed out that this is a problem of education in which parents and teachers need particularly to cooperate. It was agreed that some of the things which should be taken into consideration in determining the amount of home study are the age, mental and physical condition, and attitude of the child, the home surroundings, and the time available for play after homework is completed. Some of the advantages of home study which were brought out were as follows: it keeps parents in touch with the school program; it develops a feeling of responsibility in the child; it makes school work a part of out-of-school situations; and it provides constructive employment for time which might otherwise be spent in idleness. There are, however, serious disadvantages such as its uneven distribution, with three or four hours of work one night and almost none another, and the time it often takes from sleeping and recreation. It is easier for children to study effectively in school where conditions are right than in a home where conditions are wrong.

The panel wisely did not attempt to arrive at a conclusion, but left its audience and the public of parents, teachers, and children to draw their individual conclusions.

Sixty-nine Bank Street

To many parents and teachers "Sixty-nine Bank Street" has come to stand for a stimulating approach to education. The Cooperative School for Student Teachers and the Harriet Johnson Nursery School are now launching an informal monthly bulletin designed "to share ideas before they become dogmas, research work, while it is in the study stage, and a gamut of educational thinking from nursery ages up." In the first issue of *Sixty-nine Bank Street,* which will be published in October, the programs of nine- and ten-year-old children as related to their interests and skills will be discussed by Lucy Sprague Mitchell in a report on the work of a group of experienced teachers who have been meeting under her leadership. Later issues will include articles on the interpretative possibilities of standard psychological tests in the modern school, the educational implications to social planning, and experiments in music, dramatics, and science. More detailed information may be secured from Eleanor Bowman, Chairman of the Editorial Committee.

Summer Play Schools for City Children

In an address on "Summer Activities for City Children" given on July 24 over WEAF, Harold G. Campbell, Superintendent of Schools of New York City, paid tribute to the Child Study Association "for its guidance and counsel in the formulation of the summer program of the Board of Education, and for all that it has done in years past in its play schools for the all day care of children. Until this year when Federal funds became available for play schools and day camps, the Child Study Association carried almost the entire burden of this work."

Dr. Campbell's address described the thirty summer play schools and day camps which have been established by the Board of Education, with the cooperation of Robert Moses, Commissioner of Parks, William Hodson, Commissioner of Welfare, and the Child Study Association of America:

"More than six thousand children will spend two days a week in the park and two days a week in school. The Park Department has arranged accommodations and recreational facilities. The Works Division of the Department of Public Welfare has given us the teachers and the attendants who will accompany the children from school to the parks. The local transit companies are cooperating with free

STUDY GROUPS

Headquarters Program — 1934-35

THE CHILD STUDY ASSOCIATION announces six regular study groups of twelve meetings each and a special training course for leaders. For more detailed information, consult the Program of Activities.

INTRODUCTION TO PARENTHOOD

Ruth Brickner, M.D., and Mrs. Anna W. M. Wolf
Fridays, at 11 a.m.

Lectures and demonstrations of special interest to prospective mothers and those with young infants—emotional aspects of pregnancy, the family group, biology of heredity, physiology of pregnancy, the new-born infant.

EARLY AND LATER INFANCY

Mrs. Marion M. Miller—Mondays, at 11 a.m.

The child from the first month to the third year—the nature of the child, habits, establishment of routine, the learning process, the child and other people, play.

THE EARLY YEARS OF CHILDHOOD

Mrs. Anna W. M. Wolf—Mondays, at 2:30 p.m.

The little child's growth, emotional development, and learning processes—the foundations of personality, habits, discipline and obedience, sex education, family and social relationships.

THE CHILD FROM SIX TO TWELVE

Mrs. Cécile Pilpel—Wednesdays, at 11 a.m.

Characteristics and needs—personality development, physical growth, social relationships, activities and interests, school, independence and responsibility.

THE ADOLESCENT

Mrs. Marion M. Miller—Tuesdays, at 11 a.m.

The profound changes of this period and their effect on psychological and social development—physical and psychological factors, deviations from normal, family relationships, educational problems.

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

Mrs. Sidonie M. Gruenberg—Wednesdays, at 11 a.m.

Everyday problems of childhood, their causes and forces making for their improvement—primary influence of the home, interaction of family members, place of authority in family life, growth of freedom in the family setting.

LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Thursdays, at 10 a.m.

For leaders and qualified students. Satisfactory completion of the course will be individually determined and will entitle the student to an official statement to this effect. Application must be made in person to the Director of Study Groups.

221 West Fifty-seventh Street, New York, N. Y.

transportation. The activity program is designed to widen the experience range of the children, so as to make them more teachable and to build them up physically. It includes nature study, the arts and crafts, dramatics, and camping. They will also learn to cook their own meals.

"We have found it to be one of the handicaps of the modern city school that too many of its children have an experience range so narrow that they do not fully comprehend the things they read about in their readers, or the stories their teachers tell them. Thousands of these children have never been to a farm or to the seashore. They have never seen a lamb. They have never sailed a boat or caught a crab. They read about these things or hear about them, but they have no clear mental picture of the objects involved, or of the background against which these things are set.

"Our plans for this summer will make it possible for thousands of children to come into closer contact with nature and with life as it is lived outside the classroom and away from the home neighborhood. These children will have the opportunity to see and do things that formerly were available only to their more fortunate brothers and sisters whose parents could afford to take them annually to the mountains or to the beach.

"So we have great hopes for our summer program, and we feel deeply indebted to our Mayor, our Park Department, and the Works Division of our Department of Welfare. I have dwelt upon the educational advantages of our program; the health advantages are obvious. We look forward to the day when the life experiences that now are enjoyed by the few will be available to all; when public education will include not merely attendance at class during the winter, but an opportunity for life in the open during the summer."

Dr. Campbell was introduced by Adele S. Mossler, Director of the Summer Play Schools Department of the Child Study Association. His expression of appreciation of the Association's work has been especially gratifying since, in spite of many obstacles brought about by the reduction of budget and curtailment of staff, the Summer Play School Department is continuing to carry on its own program, on which this city-wide project is based. Fifteen play schools in settlements, community houses, and public schools have been operating under its supervision. In addition requests for assistance in planning and organizing summer play school programs have been received from organizations in many parts of the country.

Parents as the President Sees Them

The unique position of parents and parents' associations "in the evolution and stabilization of our democratic form of government, and in the economic and social development of our country," has been recognized by President Roosevelt in a letter read at the Thirteenth Annual Dinner of the United Parents Association of New York on April 30. The President goes on to say that "the school has been called upon to assume many of the responsibilities which were formerly undertaken by the home. It cannot supplant the home in understanding and bringing out the best in the individual child. It is therefore, as I see it, through these group conferences and meetings of parents that parents may discuss how to preserve the essentials of the home, clarify its functions, and adapt them to changing conditions."

Community Entertainments for Children

An average attendance of seventeen hundred children on Saturday afternoons in a small town—at what? Questionable movies? Not in Maplewood, New Jersey, where a group of mothers decided to show their children what fun there is in better things. Plays, musical programs, speakers with films on exploration and nature lore, the finest professional artists obtainable are offered in the high school auditorium at only ten cents a child.

A special Saturday Entertainment Committee, made up of representatives of local parent-teacher and women's club organizations, has sponsored this program of children's entertainments which will begin its second series this fall. The Maplewood experiment has proved so successful that many other communities are planning to establish similar programs. The National Music League, which has cooperated with the Maplewood Committee from the first, has therefore inaugurated a new department to aid interested communities. The League feels that it is possible for such a series to be self-supporting at an extremely low ticket cost. The real problem is to find enough programs of the highest standard, which are suited to children from five to twelve years old. Entertainments of doubtful moral or educational background are not the only ones to offer pitfalls. Those which bore children are almost equally value-

less. Enough variety to suit every taste is important; a good series should include drama, music, nature lore, adventure, and some pure "entertainment." In a questionnaire answered by Maplewood children, every one of the eight programs was listed as first choice by some children.

These entertainments will never entirely take the place of movies. They do make it possible and practicable for communities to offer children an appealing introduction to the pleasure of listening to excellent speakers, enjoyable music, and professional drama. Such experience encourages a larger cultural vision and higher standards in the individual child, and should lead to finer creative work in the whole field of the entertaining arts.

Further information may be secured from Mrs. James L. McFadden, 580 Ridgewood Road, Maplewood, New Jersey.

Child Study in Chicago

The Chicago Association for Child Study, in cooperation with Carson Pirie Scott and Company of Chicago, is holding a joint conference from October 8 to 20. The meetings will cover both the theory and practice of child development and will include many activity programs of practical help to mothers. Among the speakers are Ernest Groves, University of North Carolina; John E. Anderson, University of Minnesota; Maude E. Watson, Children's Fund of Michigan; and Hughes Mearns, Columbia University.

The Public and the School

The Fourteenth Annual American Educational Week, which will be observed November 5-11, will center its programs around the theme of "Educating for Tomorrow." The observance of Education Week is sponsored annually by the National Education Association, the United States Office of Education, the Joint Commission on Emergency in Education, and other national organizations. Each community will adapt the observance to its own needs, in an effort to make its citizens aware of the imperative necessity of educational change. The schools will be open to visitors, and every effort will be made to inform them of the present situation, so that they may participate intelligently in these changes which are so important for our social progress. The kind of education we offer children today will largely determine the character of our national life tomorrow. Teachers, par-

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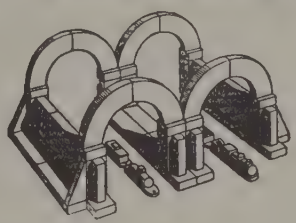

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Child Study Association

New Publications for parents and study groups

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OUR CHILDREN: *A Handbook for Parents,* edited by Dorothy Canfield Fisher and Sidonie Matsner Gruenberg, is being widely used as a source of authoritative material on the normal growth and development of children, and their needs and opportunities in the world of today. Its usefulness is greatly increased by the detailed STUDY OUTLINE which has been prepared as a supplement and guide to the comprehensive text. Parent-teacher groups, clubs, church groups, and individuals will find this of inestimable value in any plan of organized study. It follows the four sections of the book and is accompanied by reference lists for further reading.

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Study Outline separately, $ .10

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ents, and the interested public are being called upon to appraise the work of our present school system and to formulate new objectives.

Handbook for Leaders

A Handbook for Leaders in Parent Education Groups in Emergency Education Programs has been prepared under the direction of the Advisory Committee on Emergency Education Programs of the National Council of Parent Education, in cooperation with the Office of Education, United States Department of the Interior. Its sixty pages cover the field admirably, ranging from practical advice on organization of groups and selection and use of materials for meetings, to a discussion of the subtle relationships of leader to group and of the factors which influence the learning of parents in study group situations. The appendices include well organized and selected outlines, suggestions on preparation for the emergency leader, suggested forms for record keeping, and bibliographies.

The preparation of this pamphlet enlisted the active cooperation of fourteen parent education workers. Its pages show evidence of the unusual value of competent collaboration, as well as of the inconsistencies which come from differing emphasis. Everything which could be of practical value to an inexperienced leader has been thought of. But, for a pamphlet which is directed to beginners, some sections, as for instance that on the meaning and use of discussion in parent education, are a bit abstruse. Taken as a whole, however, the *Handbook for Leaders,* in regard to both content and point of view, should be an effective instrument for better parent education.

National Council Service Bulletin

Parent Education, a service bulletin for members of the interested professions, will be issued six times during 1934-1935 by the National Council of Parent Education. Contents include reports of organization and development in the field, critical discussions of methods and materials, a series of articles outlining the parent education work and opportunities of various professions, and sections devoted to research, to news and events, to abstracts and quotations from pertinent articles in current professional periodicals, to bibliographies and sources of information, and to book reviews. Although this bulletin is addressed primarily to professionals who affiliate with the Coun-

cil, libraries and persons ineligible for affiliation may also subscribe.

Parent Education in the Federal Program

Twenty-one states employed parent education supervisors in connection with their emergency education programs during the past year. A summary of this work will be published by the National Council of Parent Education in the fall. Parent education activities under the Federal Emergency Education Program will be continued during the coming year through funds provided by the Federal Relief Administration for the appointment of state supervisors of projects in emergency education. The Parent Education office of the Educational Division and the Federal Emergency Relief Administration continue to offer a consultation service and some assistance in the preparation and distribution of materials.

United Parents' Association Conference

The United Parents' Associations of New York City, in cooperation with the School of Education of New York University, held a Program Conference on Monday evening, September 17, at the University. The purpose of the conference was to discuss methods of organization and topics for parents' meetings. The conference covered a wide range, including "The Value of a Discussion Group," "Integrating Community Resources," "Recreation and Leisure-Time Activities for the Community," "Guidance," and "The Family's Relation to Social Change."

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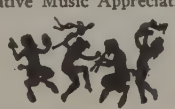
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The School and the School Child

(*Continued from page 13*)

provide children with the better opportunities of education, problems are adjusted in a variety of ways. In some cases the school has been at fault, but, because the home was able to sense the situation, it was possible for the tension to be relieved. There are other instances in which the home has failed to understand the situation and the school has been able to sense the difficulty. Through its guidance remedial measures are frequently effected. In a third kind of situation both home and school may be trying separately to help the child to adjust to his associates, but both may be failing. The most satisfactory solution is almost always achieved when parents and teachers work together, pooling their data, and agreeing upon the course to be followed by each.

Book Reviews

(*Continued from page 21*)

its nineteenth century style and length are not now obstacles to its reading.

There remains for today's reviewers only an appraisal of the illustrations by Keith Henderson—a difficult task. Mr. Henderson is a scholar of a high order, who has spared no pains in acquainting himself with the art forms of the ancient Mexicans. Many of the illustrations are copies of old manuscripts. They furnish the young reader with valuable cultural information that he could not easily find except in museums. In his own drawings, which are executed with the same elaborate detail as those from which he drew his inspiration, there is, however, a vaguely disturbing factor. Mr. Henderson has verve and dash, an excellent feeling for line and composition. He has used with great felicity the decorative schemes of the Mexicans in his drawings. He has a certain sweep. But it seems that the figures are dramatized rather than dramatic. We do not sense from the pictures, as we do from the measured words of Prescott, the virility and courage and power that animated both the Indians and their conquerors. This reservation should not, however, minimize the artist's achievement. He has made vivid, as well as decorative, the romantic episodes of an earlier period. Young readers, provided they enjoy history, will appreciate the wealth and richness of his illustration. S. B.

The Editors' Page

SOME children are "born short" and some are "born long," and that is the only distinction between them—as William Haley Smith used to say, apropos of his own son, who was a mathematical genius but was less gifted in some other faculties.

THE unusual child is as frequently the one who is too far advanced mentally to fit into his group as the one who is mentally deficient. The child who has grown too rapidly or too grossly, perhaps from a glandular abnormality, is as difficult to adjust as the one whose glands have retarded proper growth.

JANE ADDAMS tells of a little girl at Hull House whose maladjustment was so grave that she was taken to the Institute for Juvenile Research for observation, a prospect of which she boasted loudly. The tests showed that mentally she was years ahead of her group, a discovery that, in some way, preceded her when she returned. As she stepped out of the car, her playmates formed a ring about her and sang tauntingly, "Mary went to be examined to be an idiot and she couldn't pass"—to them as much of a handicap as the reverse would be.

MODERN education is developing toward making each child feel that he is an individual. Even in large schools pupils are given individual attention, are allowed to go faster than others in the group if they are able; if they advance slowly there is no stigma attached. The old plan, of forcing children, like car fenders, through a certain pattern in home or in school, is disappearing so rapidly that one can see customs change almost month by month. The most important thing to remember is that, no matter how much understanding of the unusual child there may be in the home or in the school, little can be accomplished unless the two work together. When this is done, the gap between what we have considered the normal and the "different" child will disappear, and difference will be seen as an unobtrusive variation in development which proper treatment will correct.

Mary L. Langworthy

CHILD STUDY

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THE CHILD WHO IS DIFFERENT

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